

Adolescents' Mental Health: Can Memorizing The Qur'an Affect It?

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ABSTRACT

Background: The prevalence of mental health problems among adolescents is increasing. One way to improve mental health and help relieve stress is through memorizing the Quran. **Objective:** To determine the relationship between Quran memorization activities and other factors on adolescents' mental health at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Negeri 42 Jakarta in 2024. **Methods:** This quantitative research uses a cross-sectional design. Data were analyzed using the chi-square test with a sample of 107 respondents selected through proportional random sampling. **Results:** Students who experienced mental health problems, as assessed by the SDQ 20 questionnaire screening for ages 11-18 years, showed that 55.1% were in the abnormal category and 36.4% in the borderline category. There was a significant relationship between Quran memorization activity (P -value = 0.024) and social environment (P -value = 0.001) with mental health. However, counseling and genetic guidance services did not show any significant relationship with mental health (P -value > 0.05). **Conclusion:** The study suggests that schools can support students' mental health through meetings, counseling, Quran activities, and guidance from teachers. It is recommended to implement mental health screening programs at schools, provide spiritual and mental guidance, create Quran memorization award programs, and promote mental health education. Encouraging students to engage in positive activities can also help improve their mental well-being.

Keywords: Adolescent, Mental Health, Quran Memorization Activities

INTRODUCTION

Globally, one in seven children aged 10 to 19 years has a mental disorder (World Health Organization, 2021). The Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey Report (I-NAMHS) indicates that one in three adolescents in Indonesia aged 10 to 17 years experiences mental health problems. Based on the Mental Health Survey (2023), the prevalence of mental health problems among the population aged 15 years and older by province in Indonesia is 2%. In DKI Jakarta Province, the prevalence among individuals aged ≥ 15 years is 2.3%, and among MTs graduates, it is 2.2%.

Many factors can contribute to adolescents experiencing mental disorders, including parenting, environmental health, and socioeconomic factors (Widya *et al.*, 2022). Other factors include access to counseling services, social environment, and genetics (ZEGA *et al.*, 2024); (Haniyah, Novita and Ruliani, 2022); (Syahputra *et al.*, 2021).

Counseling services are crucial in guiding students through challenges

(UMMAH *et al.*, 2025). A supportive social environment is essential for healthy development, whereas poor conditions can negatively impact mental health (Replita, 2020). Genetics can be inherited from family members, including grandparents, parents, and siblings (Hariyadi & Rusdianah, 2021). Individuals with a family history of mental disorders are at higher risk (Kirana, Anggreini and Litaqia, 2022), and previous studies have established a link between genetics and mental health issues (Syahputra *et al.*, 2021).

Positive influences can enhance mental health by reducing psychological stress (Yasipin, Rianti and Hidayat, 2020). Inner peace and happiness can be achieved through a connection with the Qur'an, as stated in Surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 28:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"The believers and their hearts are at peace by remembering Allah. Remember, it is only by remembering Allah that the heart becomes peaceful."

Imam Qurthubi's interpretation of Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:28) states that dhikr,



both spoken and in the heart, brings peace. "Dzikrullah" includes speech, contemplation, and appreciation of Allah's words, fostering a deep connection through Qur'an memorization and divine values (Vanilla, Cahyo and Lubis, 2024). Hadiths from Bukhari and Muslim emphasize the Qur'an's power to bring peace through reading and memorization. Memorizing the Qur'an may also impact brain atrophy, as individuals who memorize it tend to have greater gray matter, white matter, and total brain volume, which helps preserve brain tissue (Rahman *et al.*, 2020). Reciting the Qur'an while memorizing it has healing effects, such as reducing stress hormones and activating endorphins. This promotes relaxation, stabilizes the body's chemical balance, lowers blood pressure, and slows breathing, heart rate, pulse, and brain activity (Hidayat *et al.*, 2023).

Based on a preliminary study involving interviews with tahfidz teachers at MTs Negeri 42 Jakarta, it was found that the school has a Qur'an memorization program (tahfidz). Additionally, mental health screening questionnaires using the SDQ 20 instrument were distributed to students, revealing that 24.2% of students experienced emotional issues, 9.1% had behavioral problems, 18.2% exhibited hyperactivity, and 3% faced peer difficulties. Previous research indicates that factors such as Qur'an memorization activities, social environment, counseling guidance, and genetics are related to adolescent mental health. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between Qur'an memorization activities and other factors affecting mental health among adolescents at MTs Negeri 42 Jakarta.

The research instruments consist of several questionnaires designed to cover all variables. For variables such as Qur'an memorization activity, social environment, counseling guidance services, genetics, and mental health, validated and reliable questionnaires have been used—each based on the specific variable. These instruments have been tested for validity and reliability (all five questionnaires are reliable), ensuring that they accurately measure the intended variables.

METHODS

This study employs a cross-sectional design and was conducted at MTs Negeri 42 Jakarta in July 2024. Quantitative methods with a correlation approach are used to measure the relationship between variables and to test hypotheses statistically. The population includes 107 students from grades 8 and 9, selected through proportional random sampling. Grade 7 students were not included as they have not yet been exposed to Qur'an memorization activities.

Data were collected via questionnaires assessing mental health (dependent variable) and Qur'an memorization, counseling services, and social environment (independent variables). Validity was tested using a questionnaire sheet filled out directly by a sample of 32 respondents, who have similar characteristics to the actual sample. Validity was determined by comparing the Pearson correlation coefficient (r -calculated) with the r -table value at $\alpha = 0.05$. A variable item is considered valid if the r -calculated value exceeds the r -table value.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold above 0.6 indicating acceptable reliability. The data analysis involved univariate and bivariate methods, utilizing the chi-squared test.

This study has obtained ethical approval, including informed consent and data protection for participants, with the ethical approval number Un.01/F.10/KP.01.1/KE.SP/07.08.029/2024 from the Health Research Ethics Commission, Faculty of Health Sciences, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution Frequency between Characteristics and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Charact eristics of Respon dents	Mental Health					
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age						
12	3	37,5	3	37,5	2	25
13	29	67,4	14	32,6	0	0
14	24	49	19	38,8	6	12,2

Characteristics of Respondents	Mental Health					
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
15	3	42,9	3	42,9	1	14,3
Gender						
Male	18	40	23	51,1	4	8,9
Female	41	66,1	16	25,8	5	8,1
Class						
8	34	57,6	22	37,3	3	5,1
9	25	52,1	17	35,4	6	12,5

Based on Table 1, 67.4% of the 107 respondents, who are 13 years old, exhibited abnormal mental health. A higher proportion of female adolescents (66.1%) experienced this compared to males (40%), and more students in grade 8 (57.6%) were affected.

Table 2. Distribution Frequency of Mental Health, Quran Memorization Activities, Counseling Guidance Services, Social Environment and Genetics of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)
Mental Health		
Abnormal	59	55,1
Borderline	39	36,4
Usual	9	8,4

Variable	Frequency (n=107)	Percentage (%)
Quran Memorization Activities		
Less	52	48,6
Good	55	51,4
Counseling Services		
Not Good	50	46,7
Good	57	53,3
Social Environment		
Bad	53	49,5
Good	54	50,5
Genetic		
Yes	11	10,3
Not	96	89,7

Based on Table 2, among the 107 respondents, 55.1% exhibited abnormal mental health, 36.4% were borderline, and 8.4% were normal. Qur'an memorization was categorized as good in 51.4% of respondents and poor in 48.6%. Participation in counseling was deemed good for 53.3% and poor for 46.7%. The social environment was considered good for 50.5% of respondents and poor for 49.5%. Additionally, 10.3% had a family history of mental disorders, while 89.7% did not have such a family history.

Table 3. The Relationship between Quran Memorization Activities and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Quran Memorization Activities	Mental Health						Total	P-value	
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		%
Less	29	55,8	15	28,8	8	15,4	52	100	0,024
Good	30	54,5	24	43,6	1	1,8	55	100	

Based on Table 3, among adolescents with fewer Qur'anic memorization activities, 55.8% had abnormal mental health conditions. Conversely, among adolescents with good Qur'anic memorization activities, 54.5%

experienced abnormal mental health conditions. A significant relationship was found between Qur'anic memorization activities and the mental health of adolescents in Islamic schools, with a P-value of 0.024 (<0.05).

Table 4. Relationship between Counseling Guidance Services and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Counseling Services	Mental Health						Total	P-value	
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		%
Not Good	26	52	17	34	7	14	50	100	0,149
Good	33	57,9	22	38,6	2	3,5	57	100	

Based on Table 4, 52% of adolescents who were not proficient in participating in counseling guidance services had abnormal mental health conditions. In contrast, 57.9% of adolescents who were proficient in participating in counseling guidance

services experienced abnormal mental health conditions. There was no significant relationship between counseling guidance services and the mental health of adolescents in Islamic schools, with a P-value of 0.149 (>0.05).

Table 5. The Relationship between Social Environment and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Social Environment	Mental Health						Total	P-value	
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual				
	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Bad	39	73,6	12	22,6	2	3,8	53	100	0,001
Good	20	37	27	50	7	13	54	100	

Based on Table 5, 73.6% of adolescents with a poor social environment had abnormal mental health, while 37% of adolescents with a good social environment experienced abnormal

mental health. There was a significant relationship between social environment and the mental health of adolescents in Islamic schools, with a P-value of 0.001 (<0.05).

Table 6. Relationship between Genetics and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School.

Genetic	Mental Health						Total	P-value	
	Abnormal		Borderline		Usual				
	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Yes	8	72,7	2	18,2	1	9,1	11	100	0,403
Not	51	53,1	37	38,5	8	8,3	96	100	

Based on Table 6, 72.7% of adolescents with a family history of mental disorders had abnormal mental health, while 53.1% of adolescents with no family history of mental disorders experienced abnormal mental health. There was no significant relationship between adolescents' genetics and their mental health, with a P-value of 0.403 (>0.05).

Discussion

Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School

Mental health is a condition of well-being in which individuals are aware of their potential, able to cope with normal life pressures, work productively, and contribute to their communities (WHO, 2022). According to WHO (2022), psychological changes that occur when children reach adulthood can be factors causing mental health disorders, along with various challenges and new experiences they may face for the first time.

This study found that adolescents with mental health conditions categorized as abnormal were mostly aged 13 years (67.4%). At age 13, adolescents are prone

to mental and emotional problems, as they often have abundant energy and intense or unstable emotions. A lack of self-control can lead to abnormal behavioral responses (Malfasari *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, most of the respondents were female (66.1%) compared to males. According to research by (Gintari *et al.*, 2023), gender influences adolescent health conditions. Women tend to be two to three times more prone to depression than men, partly due to differences in how they handle problems. When men feel depressed, they often distract themselves with activities such as watching movies, exercising, or consuming alcohol (Butcher, 2013, in (Nurjannah *et al.*, 2024).

Using the SDQ 20 questionnaire, this study found that 55.1% of respondents had abnormal mental health. This aligns with (Malfasari *et al.*, 2020), where 36.1% of adolescents at SMP 18 Pekanbaru also experienced abnormal mental health. Poor mental health can negatively impact adolescents' development and daily life. Cognitive impairments, learning difficulties, and poor concentration may lead to misbehavior in school, increasing the risk of delinquency and criminal

behavior in adulthood (Malfasari *et al.*, 2020).

Quran Memorization Activities and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School

The activity of memorizing the Quran is the process of remembering and committing to memory the verses of the Quran, either in whole or in part, so that they can be retrieved from memory without looking at the text. Memorizing the Quran is a divine command that benefits Muslims both in this world and in the hereafter (Khofifaturrochmah and Rahmaini, 2024). Additionally, memorizing and reading the Quran promote calmness, enhance memory, and help stabilize anxiety and stress (Hoyt *et al.*, 2016).

In this study, most respondents engaged in good Quran memorization activities (51.4%). This aligns with Wulandari's (2018) research, which shows that most students of MTs Roudhatul Muhibbin Bekasi are proficient in memorizing the Quran (72.9%). Based on the analysis results, it was also demonstrated that there is a relationship between Quranic memorization activities and mental health in adolescents at School (MTs) Negeri 42 Jakarta ($P=0.024$). In the study, (Abd Rahman *et al.*, 2019) stated that there is a positive relationship between Quran memorization and physical and mental health. Similarly, (Saqib *et al.*, 2017) explained that there can be a strong linear relationship between Quran memorization and depression.

The Quran possesses a unique harmony that other texts do not have. The verses of the Quran are composed of words filled with kindness and can provide peace of mind (Nadimah, 2018). Chanting holy Quran verses can lower stress hormones, activate endorphins, increase relaxation, improve the body's chemical system, reduce blood pressure, and slow down breathing, heart rate, pulse, and brainwave activity (Hidayat *et al.*, 2023). Memorizing the Quran brings one closer to Allah SWT, promoting mental health, growth, development, and self-awareness, thereby fostering peace and tranquility in the soul (Mahfud, Mahmudah and Wihartati, 2017).

In addition, the social environment plays an important role in supporting or hindering the process of memorizing the Quran. Parents' attention and discipline,

support from tahfidz teachers through rewards, delivering good material, providing emotional support, and encouragement from peers can motivate individuals to remain istiqomah (steadfast) in memorizing the Quran (Herdiansyah, 2021); (Zaini, 2020); (Rosyidi, Anggriana and Pratama, 2024). This indicates that a positive social environment contributes significantly to fostering enthusiasm, motivation, and perseverance in the memorization process.

Counseling guidance services are essential in assisting students who memorize the Quran, especially in addressing decreased motivation, boredom, and stress during memorization. (Ismanto, 2023) found that Islamic counseling guidance services can increase motivation to memorize the Quran, including fostering enthusiasm and positive attitudes.

Counseling Guidance Services and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School

These services help students understand themselves, overcome personal difficulties, develop social skills, and make informed decisions regarding education, careers, and life. They also support psychological, emotional, and social growth, which is key to improving student behavior (Khoiriah, 2015).

In this study, 53.3% of respondents actively participated in counseling guidance services. These services aid adolescents in managing mental health, coping with challenges, and developing emotional well-being skills. Previous research indicates that there is an influence between counseling guidance and mental health (ZEGA *et al.*, 2024).

However, based on the analysis, there was no significant relationship between counseling guidance services and mental health in adolescents at School (MTs) Negeri 42 Jakarta ($P=0.149$). These findings align with Badriah's research, which also found no relationship between counseling services and mental health. Despite the lack of a direct relationship, schools need to facilitate school-based health services to address mental health issues because counseling services are the closest health resource available to students within schools to manage mental health problems.

Previous studies highlight that collaboration between mental health

services and school health teams supports effective school-based mental health programs. Schools with the Healthy School award tend to implement mental health education more effectively, including regular counseling for students, compared to schools without the award (Kusumawardani *et al.*, 2023).

Schools should integrate counseling services with support from parents, guidance teachers, and the community to assist students facing mental health challenges. Guidance teachers should actively promote these services to students. Additionally, schools can conduct mental health screenings to identify issues early, facilitate appropriate interventions, and promote awareness to reduce stigma, encouraging students to seek help when needed.

Social Environment and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School

The social environment influences how individuals or groups act and behave. It includes factors such as family, friends, school, workplace, community, culture, social norms, and media, all of which shape thoughts and actions in daily life (Pakaya, Posumah and Dengo, 2021). Social and environmental factors are equally important in shaping individuals' ecological behavior. The study results indicated that respondents experienced good social and environmental conditions (50.5%). This aligns with the research of (Haniyah, Novita and Ruliani, 2022), who found that respondents had good living conditions (21.5%). A positive social environment can increase security, reduce stress, and improve mental health. Conversely, a poor social environment can lead to various mental health problems, including stress, anxiety, and depression (Winei *et al.*, 2023).

In addition, environmental factors are divided into the physical environment—such as workplaces, streets, housing, waterways, landfills, and air quality—and non-physical environments, such as security, income, socioeconomic status, and other social environments (Ivan *et al.*, 2021). Non-physical environments include social settings where numerous problems can contribute to psychiatric issues in individuals. The social environment can be categorized into three: the community environment, the school environment, and the family environment (Dewantara,

2010), in (Pakaya, Posumah and Dengo, 2021). The problem of disruptive behavior in adolescents can be influenced by family and peer conflicts (Kusnadi and Yulianto, 2024).

Analysis showed a significant relationship between the social environment and adolescent mental health at MTs Negeri 42 Jakarta ($P=0.001$). This finding is consistent with (Haniyah, Novita and Ruliani, 2022), who reported that parenting, peers, and the living environment influence mental health. Similarly, (Kholifah and Sodikin, 2020) found a link between parenting and peer relationships among SMPN 2 Sokaraja students. Parenting shapes a child's character, moral judgment, behavior, and self-perception, while emotional and mental development also impact cognitive growth (Azzahra *et al.*, 2022).

Adolescents may experience both benefits and risks in peer relationships. The need for acceptance drives them to conform to group norms, which can sometimes lead to harmful behaviors that affect their mental health (Sulistiowati *et al.*, 2018). Character development in adolescents is heavily influenced by their environment. A negative residential setting can impact mental health, causing feelings of insecurity, discomfort, anxiety, fear, and sadness (Dharmayanti *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the social environment plays a vital role in human life. Humans cannot develop properly without environmental support, and when a person's social environment is adverse, it can negatively affect their mental health (Replita, 2020).

Genetics and Mental Health of Adolescents in Islamic School

Genetic or hereditary factors may be shared among family members such as grandparents, parents, siblings, or cousins (Hariyadi and Rusdianah, 2021). Genetics can provide information about traits that may be passed on to offspring and influence individual characteristics (Syahputra *et al.*, 2021).

The study found that most respondents (89.7%) had no family history of mental disorders, aligning with (Florensa *et al.*, 2023), who reported a similar trend (98.1%) among junior high school students in Pontianak City. Analysis showed no genetic link to mental health issues among adolescents at MTs Negeri 42

Jakarta ($P=0.403$), which is consistent with (Lidya, Mandagi and Pratiwi, 2021), who also found no genetic association ($P=0.149$). This suggests that genetics alone are not decisive; environmental interactions play a crucial role. The interaction between genetics and environmental factors is what ultimately determines mental health outcomes.

Although genetics do not pose a risk, environmental, behavioral, and health support factors can significantly impact students' mental health. A holistic approach is essential for promoting their well-being. Additionally, this study has limitations: first, genetic testing can be conducted using specific tools and technologies to yield more accurate results; second, the SDQ 20 screening questionnaire, which respondents fill out themselves based on their perceptions, may lead to response bias, potentially affecting the study's results. However, the researcher provided explanations to respondents on how to accurately complete the questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study, most adolescents in Islamic schools exhibited abnormal mental health, accounting for 55.1%. Good Qur'an memorization (51.4%), participation in counseling services (53.3%), and a supportive social environment (50.5%) were observed, while 98.1% had no family history of mental disorders. Qur'anic memorization and the social environment were found to be related, but counseling services showed no significant association with mental health. Schools can implement mental health screenings, parent meetings, Qur'anic tadabbur activities, and reward programs to support students. Teachers should promote counseling services, collaborate with tahfidz teachers, and provide mental health education. Future research could explore causal relationships using case-control or cohort study designs.

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